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THE BLUEBELL AND OTHER VERSE

By EMMA TURNER WHITSON





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THE BLUEBELL

AND OTHER VERSE



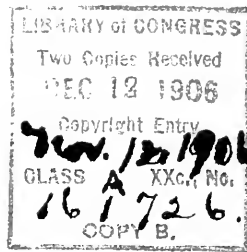
BY

EMMA TURNEY-WHITSON



R. H. WHITSON, Publisher

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

In fulfillment of a promise made the author a few months before her death, this little volume of verse was to have been published by the writer for distribution among relatives and intimate friends of the family only—those who knew her best and appreciated her writings; but owing to the fact that a number of acquaintances, on learning that such a book was to be printed, made application for copies, it was decided to publish a larger edition than was first contemplated and place the books on sale.

As a writer of prose the author was better known as "Mrs. Bob." For four years she assisted the writer in the publication of the *Dunsmuir News*, in which paper some of the poems contained herein were first printed; a few were published in the *Christian Standard*, while the others now appear in print for the first time.

Emma J. Turney was born at Turney Farm, near Barnhill, Ill., and died at Oakland, Cal., May 27, 1905, after a long and painful illness, aged 35 years, 4 months and 10 days.

For every earnest word she spake
Shall in time's furrows ripen seed;
Such labor shall our world awake,
To take deep thought for human need.

We met in sorrow at her grave,
Right lovingly we said farewell;
All richer for the life she gave,
All poorer for its broken spell.

The publisher thankfully acknowledges courtesies from Rev. Robert Whitaker for assistance in the arrangement of this book of verse and for other favors in behalf of its publication.

R. H. WHITSON.

THE BLUEBELL.

There is a story, tender, quaint, and old,
That in some twilight hour I have been told—
A story brought from out the bounteous store
Of myths and legends. This is Indian lore.
Helpful and sweet I think you will agree,
If I can tell it as 'twas told to me.

How once a little flower, white as snow,
Tossed by the breezes, passing to and fro,
Grew in a deep, dark canyon where no light
Of sun could touch, and only stars by night
Shed their soft rays and only Heaven's blue
Made up by day the little flower's view.

Day after day the modest blossom gazed—
Her pure, white face in simple trust upraised,
Nor guessed that she was wondrous fair to see,
So full she was of sweet humility—
Longing for beauty like the sky and star,
Bending above the flower from afar.

But by and by there came to her a strange
And wondrous thing—the face began to change,
Slowly at first, and scarcely seen, she grew
Like to the sky above, a lovely blue,
And in the heart, like that one seen afar,
A tiny, golden drop—a shining star.

It breathes a lesson, if we read aright,
The story of the little blossom white.
We grow like that we look upon, and love,
And long for! Turn our eyes and thoughts above,
Fill our hearts full of pure ideals, and we
Shall grow like that we most desire to be.

Our lives were given to us pure and white,
And we have power to make their colors bright,
And fair and lasting, like some pure, white star,
By clean, sweet thought, but evil thought will mar
The flower of character; Lord, help us be
Daily perfected as we look on Thee.

TO ONE WHO CONQUERED.

Dear heart, that bore thy load of pain
So bravely down life's later way,
Thou hast not lived and died in vain,
Our lives are blessed of thee today.

Thy tears like winter rains have passed,
Yet gush from hidden hillside springs;
For us thy skies were overcast,
Thy winter in our springtime sings.

For us thy common task was done,
For us thy soul was unsundered,
For us thy dull days one by one,
For us the strong triumphant mood.

Was thine the lonely forest way?
The humid and unlighted mine?
Ours is the fireside's cheerful ray,
And stones that yonder stars outshine.

Thine was the agony and sweat,
The cross that all who save must share;
Ours is thy holy influence yet,
The resurrection faith and prayer.

O soul that dwellest now serene
Beyond the noise and hurt of strife,
Whatever thy rewards unseen,
Lo! how thou livest in our life.

ROBERT WHITAKER

To the Memory of a Friend,
Mrs. R. H. W.

DREAMLAND.

I know a nook where the sweet fern grows
With nodding violet, and soft, pink rose;
Where purple bee-flowers scent the air—
Oh, the moments fly in that nook so fair.
How well I remember that hour of bliss,
The smiles, the sunshine, the heart-warm kiss—
The memory haunts me wherever I go,
Though 'twas only in Dreamland I lived it, you know.
The sleep-god is gracious, he gilds all the day
With the memory of bright dreams; and “memory”, they
say,
“Is possession.” A foretaste of long-awaited bliss
Is mine in the rapture of one Dreamland kiss.

LOVE-LETTERS.

He found her weeping softly o'er a tray
Filled with old letters, stored for many a day—
Dainty, white missives, tied with lover's blue.
"Weeping because some lover proved untrue,"
Prompted his jealous heart, hurt that his wife
Had hid from him one chapter of her life.

Nearer he drew, with noiseless step, and scanned,
Unheeded, what the message in her hand,
Whispered to her of hope unrealized.
He stopped, condemned—the missive that she prized—
The letter that was blotted with her tears
Was one he wrote to her in other years.

He was the lover whom she found untrue.
Softly he knelt, and her sweet face he drew
Close to his own, and said: "Forgive me, sweet,
That I have failed to make your life complete.
I loved you fondly then, but hear me vow:
I never loved you half so well as now!"

GONE HOME.

(In Memory of President McKinley.)

Out of the tumult and battle fray
The nation's hero went home today.
Softly the roll of the muffled drums
Spoke to the waiting—"The chieftain comes!"

Never a shout from the gathered crowd,
Only sobbing, and bared heads bowed,
Only tears from the white-faced throng
Greet the guest who is borne along.

Only the solemn march of feet
Into the Silent City's street.
Canton welcomes her honored son
Home to rest, with his work all done.

Home from the conflict—oh, sweet release
After life's battle surpassing peace,
Rest and silence. Heaven grant it be
"Nearer, Nearer my God to Thee."

MODERN PRESS DISPATCHES.

(Anent the war with Spain.)

MONDAY.

All indications make it plain
That Uncle Sam must war with Spain.

TUESDAY.

For peace there now is ground for hope,
Through mediation of the Pope.

WEDNESDAY.

The situation grows alarming—
Both nations for the fray are arming.

THURSDAY.

Honor demands full reparation.
“Free Cuba!” loudly cries the nation.

FRIDAY.

Peace indications growing thicker ;
Spain knows right well that we can lick 'er !

SATURDAY.

What does McKinley take us for ?
Our honor saved by naught but war !

SUNDAY.

Latest advices sent the Sunday
Papers say, “Cuba free on Monday.”

* * *

Which makes so plain, no one can doubt it,
The papers don't know much about it.

THE SOLDIER'S MOTHER.

(Decoration Day, 1899.)

“I bring this chaplet of roses here,”
Said a woman, bent and gray,
“For him who went from my heart and home
In the dawn of another May.

“I stood in the doorway that fair spring morn
As he marched adown the street,
And my heart was proud of my soldier boy
Who looked so trim and neat.

“He had heard the call of his country’s need,
And he answered, ‘Here am I.
Be brave, dear mother,’ his fond lips said
As he kissed me a last good-bye.

“I tried to smile as I said ‘Good-bye,’
But a woman’s heart is weak,
And the sobs came quickly and choked them back—
The words that I meant to speak.

“So I only watched till his proud young form,
In its uniform of blue,
Had faded out to a tiny speck,
In the distance lost to view.

“Then I turned again to my lonely house,
Of its last loved child bereft;
For death had taken my other sons,
And of five, but one was left.

"So passed to summer the bright spring days,
And across the waters blue
Came news that wherever my lad was found
He was ready and brave and true.

"Then another message the papers brought,
And my heart with grief stood still,
As I read that my boy was among the slain
On that terrible San Juan hill.

* * * * *

"I stood in the doorway again one morn,
When my boy came up the street.
They bore him slowly within the hall
That had echoed his merry feet.

"I kissed the forehead so cold and white,
As I whispered, 'Thy will be done—
But pity the lonely heart, O God,
That has given its dearest one.'

"So I bring a chaplet of flowers here,
And a flag, for my boy so brave;
There's plenty of time in my childless life
To brighten and 'tend his grave.

"And if souls look down from their house of light,
He may smile in his same old way,
Glad that his name is among the rest
Whom we honor and love today."

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY KNIGHT.

In olden days when the world was young—
The golden days, that have oft been sung
In glowing words by a poet's pen,—
Dwelt many noble and knightly men.
Their keen, bright sword, and their right arm strong
Won many a battle 'gainst sin and wrong.
Each knight, as he rode away to the fight,
Where he offered his life for the cause of right,
Wore fair on his bosom a knot of blue,—
A pledge from his lady, so fond and true.
Ah, never a knight wore the ribbon fair
But felt new courage to do and dare.
The thought that heartened him all the while
Was that coveted guerdon—his lady's smile!
The days of King Arthur are vanished far,
Mailed knights no longer ride forth to war,—
With shield and helmet away to the fight,
Where "law" meant "power" and "might" meant
"right."

A gentler knighthood the world knows now,
But not less valiant. Though on his brow
No iron helmet he proudly wears,
For home and country our knighthood dares.
His helmet and breastplate, a clean, pure life,
His watchword "mother," "sweetheart," or "wife;"
His cause, the cause of earth's poor oppressed;
His guerdon the knowledge of wrongs redressed;
His cherished castle, a cottage home,
Whence love and honor must never roam.

No more we sigh for the days of old,
Whose praise in story and song is told.
But womanhood cries, with her eyes tear-bright,
“Three cheers for the Twentieth Century Knight!”

THE UNEVENTFUL WAY.

("There is no chance for heroism in my line of work.")

"No chance for heroism here," you say ;
"I simply bear a burden, day by day :
The days go on, each as the one that's past,
And nothing that I do can count or last.

No little worth the time the small tasks seem,—
So far beneath the work of which I dream,—
With few to reckon them, and none to ask
If well or ill I do the lowly task."

Not so, my friend, not all the heroes they
Who win their triumphs in the world's array,
Where plaudits greet them, and where loud acclaim
Crowns them with laurels and a mighty name.

They, too, are heroes, who from day to day,
Go on their dull and uneventful way,
Dreaming, perhaps, of some beloved art,
But doing duty with a faithful heart.

And the Great Master Workman at the last,
Showing the faithful record of our past,
May say of those small things o'er which we grieved,
"Behold, how great a work thou hast achieved!"

Songs of Home and Loved Ones.

IN THE GLOAMING.

Tonight, as I sit in the gloaming,
All my thoughts fondly follow you, dear,—
My strange, truant thoughts, always roaming,—
Seem to bring you, my love, very near.

Again you are here and you hold me.
Your warm arm fondles me round,
And, as to your great heart you fold me,
I exult in the bliss I have found!

My life seems but made for this pleasure,
My duty to only be glad—
My heart gathers closely its treasure,
And defies any fate that is sad.

I am wishing that life and its favors
Might just be merged into this—
That I might know naught but what savors,
Of your handclasp so warm, and your kiss!

If life held for me no more blessings
Than this sweet experience can give—
These soul-thrilling, heart-warm caressings,
I'm sure 'tis exquisite to live.

Heart has pulsed against heart, warm and tender,
And soul has commingled with soul.
'Tis enough. Earth has yielded her splendor,
And heaven offers no fairer goal.

LOVE AS GUEST.

Love came a guest into my heart

And tarried but a day.

“How can I live, sweet Love,” I cried,

“When thou art gone away?”

“Far better had I never known,

Than grieve henceforth for thee.”

Love answered: “Then canst thou be lone

With me for memory?”

“Nay, nay! Love’s joy can not be lost

When once it is possessed;

No home is ever desolate

Where Love hath been a guest.”

THE POET.

He went to work with his clothes all worn,
For his wife was writing a poem.
She said "Too bad your clothes are torn,
But I haven't the time to sew 'em!"

With a button off, from his boisterous play,
Her son came hurrying in—
"I haven't a minute to spare today,—
Fix it up with that safety-pin!"

Then, the little daughter came in and said:
"Please sew the strings on my bonnet;
They're off, and it won't stay on my head."
"Oh, dear! When I'm writing a sonnet!"

"I can't look after you all the time,
Though, of course, it would give me pleasure—
There now, you have spoiled a lovely rhyme,
And ruined my rhythmic measure!"

"It's quite too bad that such gifts as mine
Should on household tasks be wasted.
No lips are pleased with a common wine
When Art's rich champagne they've tasted."

So her husband went with his elbows out,
While she wrote and rhymed and measured;
And her children roamed the streets about,
While her "gems of thought" she treasured.

And people asked: "Is that man's wife dead?
'Tis strange that I did not know it."
But the listeners always smiled and said:
"Oh, no; but his wife's a poet!"

IF WE DIDN'T HAVE TO COOK.

In the leafy glades we'd wander—
 If we didn't have to cook.
Oh, the wisdom we might ponder—
 If we didn't have to cook.
We would grow more wise than sages,
Learn the lore of all the ages
Written down on history's pages—
 If we didn't have to cook.

We would dress and smile so sweetly—
 If we didn't have to cook;
And we'd keep the house so neatly—
 If we didn't have to cook.
We would know where each thing's place is,
And we'd wash the children's faces,
And we'd cultivate the graces—
 If we didn't have to cook.

Living would be such a pleasure—
 If we didn't have to cook;
Comfort would be ours, full measure—
 If we didn't have to cook.
Oh, for some one whose attention
Shall be turned to an invention
That shall cure the ills I mention,
 So we will not have to cook!

HOUSEKEEPING.

Yes, my work is prosaic, I frankly admit;
For of romance it boasts not the least little bit.
But, though every hour of the whole day my hands
Are busy with pots and with kettles and pans—
Though in place of a sweet hour with some favorite book,
I must iron and scrub, I must scour and must cook—
Have you never yet heard that no power can bind
Or tie down the wings of a free-soaring mind?

Though my hands are engaged in a humble employment,
Rest assured that my mind seeks a higher enjoyment,
And on gay wings of fancy delightfully roams
In the sweet fields of romance, whose gateway has
Holmes,

Or Holland, or Whittier, opened for me.
So, in spite of surroundings, my friend, you will see
Of contentment I hold in possession the key.

It's every bit nonsense—this worry and care
About talent that's wasting itself on the air.
Just bravely go forward and know, without doubt,
If you have any genius it's bound to come out.
And genius may be but a fine-sounding name
For a nature too lazy to have any aim.
So, I'm of the notion it's better to cook
A digestible dinner than write a poor book.

Proceed with your work, be it plain household tasks,
Or science, or art. But be sure the world asks

The best there is in you. A lofty ideal
Helps the toiler to beautify even the real.
Each worthy achievement, each hard battle won,
Gives strength for new vict'ries. At each set of sun
You may deem the world better for your work well done.

BABY'S SURPRISE.

I was weary and worn one morning
With the cares of the baking day,
When my little one came with his eager face
All flushed from the heat of play.

"Please, mama," the soft voice pleaded,
"Just make me one tiny pie
To eat in my little playhouse."
I turned with impatient sigh—

"Don't bother me now; I'm busy,"
And the voice it was none too sweet.
The light was gone from his laughing eyes,
And sobered the dancing feet.

As the little one turned to obey me
No word of reproach had he,
But the sight of the quivering, rosy mouth
Was censure enough for me.

For I thought of my own sweet mother;
No matter how tired her hands,
She was always so loving and patient
With all of my childish demands.

And I whispered, "Dear Father, forgive me
When I am impatient and blind."
Then I turned again to my labor,
With the sweetness of peace in my mind.

By and by when I called the baby,
He hastened with eager feet.
No memory of past unkindness,
But pardon and trust complete

Shone out in his face. But I whispered
"I was hasty, my pet, I know.
Forgive me. These pies are for baby,
To tell him I love him so."

With a grateful kiss he repaid me.
What love in his glad blue eyes
As he said, "You're the dearest mama,
To give me this lovely s'prise."

MOTHER'S MAGIC KISS.

My little blue-eyed toddler comes and stands beside my
knee,
And a tear-stained face in trouble is uplifted anxiously.
As he holds a chubby finger to my sympathetic sight,
To show a tiny scratch that mars the flesh, so soft and
white.

I take him close within my arms, and kiss away the
trace
Of tears, that cloud the sunshine of the baby's dimpled
face.
Then I kiss the wounded finger, and I smile to hear him
tell,
In gleeful voice "My mama kissed the hurted finger
well!"

There are pathways rough and stony for his small, un-
certain feet;
There are many bumps and bruises that the tender flesh
must meet;
But his faith in mother's magic, and the power of her
spell,
Make the baby's troubles light ones,—for a kiss can
make them well!

Oh, little one, life's pathway has been thorny to my feet,
And I miss the tender solace that you seek and find so
sweet;

But my childish faith it fails me, when the road is rough
and long;
My lips forget their smiling, and my heart forgets its
song.

What solace, could I nestle, with a faith like yours, my
child,
And feel that love's caress can heal the anguish fierce
and wild.
I am scarred, and bruised and beaten. Ah, the comfort
none can tell,
Could I still believe that mother's kisses make the heart-
ache well!

THANKSGIVING.

I sat by the window musing,
When the tasks of the day were done,
 And the sky was bright
 With the soft stars' light,
As they blossomed, one by one.

'Twas an hour for sweet communion,
'Twas a time for peace and rest ;
 But my heart was rife
 With disturbing strife,
That was surging through my breast.

Though this was the glad Thanksgiving
When the heart of man uplifts,
 And its praise doth sing
 To the gracious King
Who bestows such bounteous gifts ;

Yet my heart was bitter and thankless
Because of one gift denied,
 And I tearfully thought,
 "The gift I have not
Is better than all beside."

Then Conscience, my better angel,
Came near me and whispered low,
 "You have home, you have love,
 God's best gifts from above ;
Having these, dare you murmur so?"

But I said, "There are other women
Who have all of these dear love ties,
And life is all sweet
And smooth for their feet,
There is nothing that Fate denies.

"'Tis true, of earth's homely blessings
My life has a generous store,
But these are common,
And I am human,
So my heart still cries for more."

Ungrateful I turned from the angel—
Ungrateful I sought my rest;
"The gift denied,"
My heart again cried,
"Is always the gift that is best."

On the noiseless wings of slumber,
I was borne that night to the bed
Of my fair young child,
With his face sweet and mild,
And they whispered, "The child is dead!"

"O God, to one stricken mother
Thou didst give back her dear one, I cried;
Wilt Thou not restore
The child I loved more,
Than all of the world beside!"

But sternly the angel whispered—
I heard, and my face grew white—
 “More than all of the earth
 The one gift seemed worth
That thy heart was denied tonight.

“So now in place of the baby
You may choose this gift that you sought;
 You have but to speak
 And the thing that you seek
To your waiting arms shall be brought.”

But my heart cried out for my darling
With a mother's anguished cry,
 “Give back the child,”
 Said the accents wild,
“Give back the child, or I die!”

I awoke, so great was my anguish.
Lo, my babe lay slumbering there.
 I could not speak,
 But I pressed his cheek,
So tender and soft and fair.

And I cried, “O God, I thank Thee
With a heart full of gratitude
 For Thy patient kindness
 Through all my blindness,
For Thy gifts, that are always good.

“Since Thy wonderful love and mercy
My life have so richly blessed,
Let life’s full measure
Be woe or pleasure,
I shall know that Thy way is best.”

THE BETTER WAY.

(To Sister Bradley.)

I shall not save my laurel-wreath
To deck your bier ;
My love and thanks I choose to breathe
While you can hear.

For reaching to my faltering feet
A helping hand,
To show how sympathy most sweet
Can understand ;

For pointing tenderly the way
To faith grown dim,
I want to thank you, friend, today,
While I thank Him.

TO A BRIDE AND GROOM.

Dear ones, new-bound together by the ties
Sweetest of all left man when Paradise
Was lost to Adam and to all his race,
We give you joy! May every budding grace,
That brightened Eden that first wedding morn,
Shine now on you—Love's rose without the thorn;
Love's trust, that scans the future all unfearing;
Love's pride, all other charms of love endearing.
May He who turned the water into wine
For Cana's marriage, here repeat the sign,
Honor the vows your fond lips are confessing,
And breathe upon your blended lives His blessing.

GOOD-BYE.

(To Ella.)

“Good-bye”—“Good-bye!” With quivering heart
We speak the words before we part.
How many joys and hopes and fears,
How many days and months and years,
Shall bring their pleasure or their pain
To us ere we shall meet again.

“Good-bye.” Be brave, choke back the tears;
We only feel, not speak, our fears;
But arms cling close and hearts beat fast,
At this “good-bye”—perhaps the last.
Through burning tears that dim the light,
We watch the dear form out of sight;
No time can from our hearts efface,
The image thus in love we trace.

God grant that when our last “good-bye”
Is spoken, as the evening sky
Of life grows dim, with Death’s dark night,
We see ahead heaven’s radiance bright,
Where we, made fair by love’s adorning,
Say not “good-bye,” but say “good morning.”

TO CLARA B.

(Christmas, 1895.)

Dear Clara: Though fond of a sly little prank,
My wishes for you are peculiarly "Frank";
May true love and tenderness shelter you round
And all of your life be securely "Snow-bound!"

TO FRANK.

(Christmas, 1895.)

Accept this little gift, this Christmas time,
And with it our best wishes, told in rhyme.
A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous wise—
I read your story in your kind blue eyes;
And, though I tease you, yet believe me, friend,
No kinder wish you'll have than this I send;
That life's most precious wealth may yield you part,
And crown you with the love of one true heart.

TO BOB.

(Christmas, 1895.)

Dearly beloved, I come, the last, to you,
To bring, with humble gifts, my fond and true
Heart-love for you, my generous-hearted king;
Knowing that I no dearer gift can bring
This Christmas day, than one I gave before,
In other years—myself—my heart's full store
Of truth, and tenderness, of trust and love.
These shall be yours until we wait above,
To hear the Father's accents, sweet and mild,
Pronounce the tender welcome—"Come, my child!"

TO —————.

Dear Love, when I remember how your life
Has been all shadowed with earth's care and strife;
How you have made a willing sacrifice
Of self, to others, counting not the price;
How you have banished pleasure, conquered pride,
Life's fondest hopes and dreams all put aside
With patient love that gave, uncomplaining,
Life's dearest gift, as though a common thing;
While I on selfish plans and pleasures bent,
Have railed at Fate, with thankless discontent,
Taking the good she brought, yet murmuring
Because her hand denied some cherished thing;
My heart grows humble, and would fain confess
How deep it feels its own unworthiness.

And steadily has this conviction grown:
Were I a queen upon a royal throne,
My fame and power acknowledged of all men,
I were not worthy of you even then.

Songs of Faith and Farewell

MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE.

My heart was bowed down by a burden
Too heavy for mortal to bear;
So I cried my grief to the Father,
In a pleading, importunate prayer.
"I faint 'neath the burden, my Father;
The cross is too heavy for me."
But the answer came, sweetly and clearly,
"My grace is sufficient for thee."

"Remember my weakness, O Father.
Remember how sorely I'm tried;
In the name of my dear elder Brother,
Thy loved only Son crucified,
I pray you to lighten this burden,
I pray you to hearken my plea."
I listened, and still heard the answer:
"My grace is sufficient for thee!"

"Thank God for that grace all sufficing,"
I cried, with new joy on my face;
"Let me learn, through my heartaches and crosses,
How priceless, dear Lord, is Thy grace.
Learn to drink of the cup uncomplaining,
Then turn in sweet trust unto Thee,
To whisper, 'Thy grace, O my Master,
Is richly sufficient for me.'"

A SONG OF TRUST.

Tho' He slay me will I trust Him;
 Tho' my idols, one by one,
Fade before my longing vision
 As the mist before the sun:
Tho' in every cup He send me
 There be mingled sweet and gall,
Even as I drink the wormwood
 I will trust Him, all in all.

Tho' He slay me will I trust Him.
 Tho' I cannot see my way;
Tho' I cannot know the purpose
 Of the grief He sends today.
Still I trust Him, knowing surely
 With the burdens, one by one,
He will send the strength to bear them,
 If I pray, "Thy will be done."

Tho' He slay me will I trust Him.
 Oh, thou grieved and tempest-tossed,
Trust Him, even amid thy mourning
 For the dear one, loved and lost.
When in humble resignation
 Thou dost pray, "O God, Thy will,"
He will whisper to the tempest
 Of thy anguish, "Peace, be still."

RUTH.

I like the story that is sweetly told
Of her who gleaned in Boaz' fields of gold.
Humble and poor, with toil and sorrow spent,
She followed gladly where the reapers went;
Toiling with patient care and gentle grace,
Content to fill a lowly gleaner's place.

And I have wondered if it might not be,
This story, sweet, was told to you and me,
That we might feel and know the wondrous beauty
That comes to life through humbly following duty;
Content to fill our heaven-appointed place,
How small soe'er, with cheerfulness and grace.

Dear Lord, if in Thy field I may not be
One of Thy reapers, then I pray of Thee
That I may be another lowly Ruth,
Gleaning amid Thy harvest fields of truth,
Content to find for all my toil and pain
A handful of thy precious golden grain.

INASMUCH.

There came to me once a legend,
It matters not whence nor when,
That the Lord from His home in glory
Once came to the sons of men,
With the questions: Since Christ died for you,
Bore for you the shame and pain,
Have you given yourself to His service?
Was the lesson He gave all in vain?
What sheaves have you gleaned for the harvest?
What good have you wrought in His name?
What gain can you show for the using
When the Master His talents shall claim?"

From one who had heard the question,
The answer came thus, sad and slow:
"Dear Master, I've done but little
For Him who has loved me so.
Though I longed to work in Thy vineyard,
The sad and the weary of earth,
Whose lot seemed all darkness and sorrow,
Whose life never paid for the birth,
Have needed my help. They have called me,
And my heart always answered the call;
For their sorrows bore heavy upon me
And I feared that in sin they might fall.
So I labored among them daily,
Shared with them my meager fare,
And sheltered the homeless wanderer
From the bitter, biting air.

“And some of them blessed me for it,
Recalling a mother’s prayers,
And love they had long forgotten,
Amid earth’s sins, and its snares.
I think they knew that I loved them,
And somehow, though unexpressed,
I felt that the knowledge made them
Turn again to God’s love and rest.
I never could understand it,
But I’ve noticed again and again,
We’ve more faith in God’s love and mercy
When we’ve faith in the love of men.

“So, Master, I’ve been so busy—
The poor have needed me so—
My work seems to be almost worthless,
So humble it is and so low.
Just feeding earth’s hungry children,
Just soothing their care and pain;
Just doing the task that lies nearest,—
This can merit but little gain.”

Then the Lord of the harvest answered,
With a low, sweet voice, as He smiled,
“You have done the task that was nearest
And counted it little, my child?
Have you never heard that the angels
Watch o’er from their home on high,
And no deed of mercy or goodness
That is done in His name can die?

“When you gave the cup of cold water,
Or the shelter, because of love,
Did you never guess that the Father
Recorded the act above?
Inasmuch as your *love* has done it,
To the humblest, the lowliest one,
You have ministered unto the Master—
Good servant, your work was *well* done!”

GO YE.

All solemnly were gathered there
The faithful few who saw Him rise.
Their hearts were awed, or hushed in prayer,
And love lay tender in their eyes.

For He, their risen Lord and King,
Was speaking now to each rapt heart,
That beautiful and priceless thing,
The last, last word before they part.

Say, will He tell them of the bliss
Of that far home to which He goes?
Or will he speak them balm for *this*
When they, bereft, must face earth's woes?

They wait and listen, but the sound
Rings like a trumpet, strong and clear:
"Go to all lands where man is found
And teach My word," is what they hear.

"Lo, I am with you to the end!"
His hands in tender blessing raised
As he ascended. Low they bend
To worship Him while God they praised.

"*They went with joy*"—the Word is clear;
They bore the tidings *gladly then*;
But we—ah, well, my friend, I fear
We underrate the souls of men.

Still clearly rings the mandate, "Go!"
We hear, but thus our course defend:
My duty lies at home, and so
We neither go, or send!

We deck our homes and rest at ease,
We shut our ears to that clear call,
While they, our brethren o'er the seas,
In sin and bondage dark must fall.

'Tis thus we slight His last command;
We dare be deaf to word so plain,
But see Him point that wounded hand,
And ask, "*Where is thy brother, Cain?*"

PROVERBS 10:22.

We hunger and thirst through a whole, long life
For place that has never a touch of strife.
But we taste the gall in each cup of sweetness,
We long in vain for heart-completeness;
And earth's best gifts seem sometimes but taunting
To the heart that craves and is always wanting.

But the gifts from our Father's bounteous hand
Bring the peace no human can understand.
He giveth blessing unmixed with sorrow,
A glad today with no fear for the morrow;
And the rest and shelter and peace from strife
That we hunger and thirst for all our life
Come only to him who his heart uplifts
In prayer to God for His perfect gifts.

THE CHEERING PROMISE.

Of all the promises that I read
In that dear Book I love,
There's none so cheers my weary heart,
So lifts my thoughts above,
As that one spoken by our Lord
To weary hearts oppressed—
“Ye heavy laden, come to Me,
And I will give you rest.”

Through all my life I've sought for rest,
Have sought, and found it not;
Discouraged with the fruitless quest
How sweet this sacred thought—
I've but to turn to Him who spoke
This promise, true and blest,
“Ye heavy laden, come to me
And I will give you rest.”

PAIN'S MINISTRY.

Whatever is best in the way of trial
I am willing to meet, for the hand of Pain
Holds the human heart like an unstrung viol,
And tightens it up for a finer strain.

Whatever is best for my perfect shaping
I want should come, I am not afraid;
I make no plea for ways of escaping,
But only for courage and spirit aid.

Though the quivering depths of pain are sounded,
The storm may teach me the worth of calm,
And I want my life to be full and rounded,
As though it were moulded in God's great palm.

I would grasp the best of this brief existence;
And I have lived long enough to know
That it must be bought by the soul's resistance—
By loss, temptation, and blinding woe.

So I welcome Pain as my friend and master,
And I walk with Him through sorrowing nights,
And in the dawn of each spent disaster
I find I am nearer the shining lights.

MEMORIES OF HOME.

In the old-fashioned house where I lived, long ago,
The quaint, little one-story house, long and low,
With its porch on the north, and its porch on the south,
There were two great stone chimneys, with wide-open
mouth,

That belched forth the smoke of the generous fires.
No modern invention such comfort inspires,
As that which you feel as you sit by the hearth,
In love with your lot, and at peace with the earth.
Again, looking through the long lapse of the years,
The home, with its every loved nook reappears;
The old cedar-tree in the yard, where the birds
Sing lullabies soft, that are sweeter than words,
As they flit through the branches, or sit on the nest,
The little ones sheltered and warm 'neath their breast.

Again through the orchard I roam at my will,
I gather the first, sweet wildflowers on the hill;
Then rest in the shade of the stately old trees,
Whose leaves murmur low at the touch of the breeze.
Oh, how can I name every spot that I see?
But each holds some memory sacred to me,
And to childhood's glad hour. Then I looked undis-
mayed

To the dim, misty future,—I was not afraid.
My sceptre of power I held in my hand,
And fortune *must* come at my touch of command.

I would write noble books, I would lecture, or preach,
And the world should be better for doctrines I'd teach.
Well, these dreams are dead—ne'er to quicken again,
But who shall assert that I dreamed them in vain?
No worthy ambition or dream stirs the heart
But gives us fresh impulse, and leaves us with part
Of the virtue it pictures. Then make your dreams pure,
And noble, for life shall be like them, be sure.

But in this old home, as I started to say,
A riotous troop of us nestled one day:
Five light-hearted girls and four strong, manly boys;
Each one bubbling over with innocent joys.
The father and mother so proud of us all—
Their brave little helpers to come at their call,
And lighten their burdens, and cheer their old days.
But the children have gone on their separate ways
'Till but one lonely "helper" remains to him now.
The dear mother went home; and on time-furrowed
brow,

His thin locks are blossoming white for the tomb;
But through all life's conflict, and sorrow, and gloom,
His unfaltering faith in the goodness of God
Has brightened each step of the way he has trod.
And patient and tender he follows us still,
With his love and his prayers; and we know that he will
Continue to bless us, and pray that each life
Be true to life's duties, and strong in its strife.

Thank God for the light of a true Christian home—

A beacon to guide us wherever we roam!
And though far away from that dear shelter, now,
Though the bright crown of motherhood rests on my
brow;
Though blest with new ties and the sweet name of
"wife,"
Most gladly I turn back the pages of life,
And, tracing its history with Memory's pen,
For one happy hour live my childhood again.

Dear ones in the home of my youth, left behind,
Whatever may be the new pleasures I find;
Whatever my lot, be it dark, stormy skies,
Or, radiant with sunshine, a new Paradise,
Misfortune is light if your love helps me bear it,
And no joy is perfect if you cannot share it.
Though distance has power to divide us, it never
The sweet ties of love and of kinship can sever;
But, tender and strong, as through all of our past
They shall bind us together, till Death breaks the last.
And when to that far-distant shore, one by one,
We pass to our rest, as our earth-work is done,
Where never again shall we sorrow or roam,
May God's loving hand reunite us at Home.

A DREAM.

I worshipped Beauty. One of earth's plain creatures,
Devoid of grace, and wearing homely features,
I bowed to this one idol, Pagan fashion,
I worshipped beauty with a mighty passion.

My heart was sad. I could not understand
The purpose of the great Creative Hand—
The hand whose mighty love and matchless power,
Had given beauty to the senseless flower,
While all the artist in my soul had cried
And craved this boon, yet always was denied.

After a weary day, when this old thought
Had troubled me, I longed for peace and sought
Rest and repose. Sleep brought them, and I dreamed
A dream that brightens all my life. It seemed
I stood and waited just outside the gate,
Where all who pass from earth, must stand and wait,
Until some seraph sets the gates ajar
To let them in, where all the angels are.

While standing there I thought of my whole life,—
Peaceful sometimes, yet often filled with strife.
Thought how, at times, my hungering cry for beauty
Had drowned the warning voice that whispered "duty."
Still, memory could not make me wholly sad,
I felt that there was good, as well as bad.

I seemed again to hear some earth-friend say:
"You helped me back into the narrow way."
I thought of how my heart had learned to take
Its cross and bear it for the Master's sake.

And then I pondered: "When I enter in
The gate, where cometh never any sin;
Where I can daily watch the angels' faces,
And see their perfect beauty, and true graces
May I not grow like to the lovely throng,
And find the beauty I have craved so long?"

Just then three angels came, with wings of light,
Near where I stood and all around was bright.
They paused and looked me o'er with wondering eyes,
Whose hue reflected Heaven's tender skies.
They read the story of earth's pain and losses;
They knew I oft had fallen 'neath its crosses,
But at the last, won victory over sin,
And waited here that they might let me in.

I read my welcome in their loving eyes.
And "Welcome home!" re-echoed through the skies.
Then, as I passed into the realm of bliss,
I heard them say, "How beautiful she is!"
You say "'Twas nothing but a dream," but I
Believe that angels left their home on high
To whisper in my dream the message sweet:
"Have faith; thy beauty shall be made complete."



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